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TAGS: MOPS MASS PGOV SU  
SUBJECT: GOS MOBILIZES PDF

Classified By: Political Officer Ron Capps for reasons 1.4 b and d.

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) Local Arabic language press reported that the Ministry of the Interior had mobilized the Popular Defense Forces across Darfur in order to "confront foreign intervention." The move can be seen as a continuation of the full court press put on by the NCP against blue-hatting the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). It should also be viewed in the light of recent changes in the Ministry of Defense (septel) as a show of force by President Bashir. End Summary.

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MOI Opens PDF Camps Across Sudan  
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¶2. (C) In a public ceremony at the Merkhiyat PDF camp near Omdurman, Minister of Interior Zubir Taha announced on March 4 the recall of al Popular Defense Forces (PDF) in Sudan and the immediate re-opening of the PDF training camps. In his speech Taha said "foreign intervention targets Islam," and international troops want to "seize our oil." He added comments to the effect that genocide, ethnic cleansing and marginalization were fallacies and propaganda put out by the United Nations (UN).

¶3. (C) Presidential Advisor Gazi Salah al Din, speaking at the same gathering, said the United States is "planting sedition" in Darfur in an attempt to fragmentize the Sudanese people. He continued saying that America wanted to colonize Sudan; "we are ready for America," he concluded.

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The PDF  
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¶4. (C) The PDF are an organized militia raised initially by the National Islamic Front under former Prime Minister Sadiq al Madhi. They remain loyal to the party - now the National Congress Party - rather than the country or the people like the army. Thus, they are a counter balance to the Army.

¶5. (C) There is deliberate confusion over the chain of command for the PDF. The Minister of the Interior declared the camps open and formally re-called the PDF to active service. The Ministry of Defense Foreign Liaison Officer, Brigadier Mubarek, told poloff in 2005 that the PDF were part of the MOD. Retired military officers we spoke to say the PDF are not controlled by the military but rather under the direct control of the NCP through the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS). Our experience in Darfur shows that the PDF fought alongside the military but were primarily under the control of NISS officers.

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Comment  
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¶6. (C) The mobilization of the PDF can be seen as just another sign that the NCP is serious about defending their sovereignty against foreign intervention. The sign is designed to be seen both internally and externally. For the international community, the move is clearly just another of many exhibitions of the willingness of the government to fight UN intervention in Darfur. For internal consumption, the mobilization shows that despite widespread popular concurrence with the idea of bringing the UN to Darfur, the NCP is against it and will fight it. Further, should be seen in the light of the recent dismissal of 400 serving army officers and the re-structuring of the Sudanese Armed Forces (Septel). The PDF are loyal to the NCP. It appears that President Bashir may doubt the loyalty of the army.

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